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# MODERN BOY

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No. 14. New Series  
MAY 21st, 1938

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including—

## DUTCH- MAN'S PRIZE!

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COMPETITION







As the boat slipped into view, Barney Hall gave a sudden start of utter amazement, then leaped forward, shouting to the oarsmen.

Barney Hall stood in the narrow fissure of the rock. His eyes gleamed at the boy under knitted brows.

Peter had saved him from the hunting blacks, revealed the secret of his hiding-place, and the hard-fisted trader of Tonga was not lost to all human feeling. But the pearls of Kohu were uppermost in his thoughts. He had lost his lugger and his crew, all he had in his quest of another man's pearls, and greed was stronger than gratitude in a heart like Barney Hall's.

It was not gratitude that kept his heavy hands off the boy—it was the fact that Peter had taken his revolver while he lay senseless in the coral cavern; that the boy was armed and he was not. But his look was black and lowering as Peter stepped from the reef into the fissure.

The boy put his finger to his lips. "They are coming!" he breathed. Barney stared from the opening. But it was not yet light enough to see across the reef.

"You scared lubber, I reckon they wouldn't be so early astir," he growled. "If they hunt me agin on the reef, they'll hunt me in the daylight, not in the dark. We got time to pull out in that canoe of your'n." His low and tone were half-threatening, half-persuasive. "Give me the bearings of the cache. I swear you shall take half, and I'll not raise a hand to harm you, after what you did."

The boy shook his head. "We'll make Ululo in that canoe," muttered Barney eagerly. "It's a long trip, but we'll make it—you'd never make it alone, but I swear I'll see you through. You've said that Tom Daly's at Ululo—that King of the Islands picked him up after the hurricane and landed him there. I reckon he'll be glad to see his son."

The boy smiled faintly. "I have told you I am not his son!" Barney made a gesture of savage impatience.

"You lie, you young swab, you lie!" he growled. "He left you on the island with his cache of pearls. You're his son, and I'll lay to that. I reckon that cache ain't fur off, either—hidden in that cave. I reckon, if a man could lay hands on it."

Peter's lip curled. He had saved the ruffian's life, and sheltered him in the coral cavern. And Barney, evidently, had searched it for the cache of pearls that he believed to be there.

"I'd give you fair play!" urged Barney. "Share and share alike—and I'd say the same if I had that gun you've got your fingers on! I'll make Ululo and land you."

"Oh, be silent!" breathed the boy of Kohu. "Listen, listen!"

Barney Hall gave an angry grunt, but he listened. He gave a start as the sound came to his ears of an oar fending off rock.

He peered out again. The darkness was lightening—it was a matter of minutes now before the sun leaped up from the horizon. But it was not light enough to see the boat that was coming. From the sound, he knew that it was feeling its way through the dangerous reef passage from the lagoon. It could only be Van Duck or some of his crew, but why they should take the risk of making that dangerous passage in the dark was a mystery to him. The channel by which it came lay directly in front of the coral cliff, with a wide shelf of rugged coral between. Barney was silent enough now—he hardly breathed.

There was light on the reef now, strengthening with every passing moment. Down the reef passage came the boat. It slipped suddenly into view, passing in front of the coral cave. And Peter saw Barney Hall give a sudden start of utter amazement, and heard him give a gasp of relief.

In the dim glimmer of light that penetrated from without, he could see the Tonga trader's face, and he could not understand the relief and satisfaction that dawned in it as he stared out at the boat. Peter gave a low cry of alarm as Barney Hall started forward.

"Are you mad? They will see—" Barney Hall grinned and tramped out of the cave, waving his hand to the boat and calling:

"Ahoy, you Tonga feller! You feller Soo, you stop along this place!"

Peter stared at the boat and at the startled faces in it; not the fuzzy heads and black faces of the dreaded Solomon Islanders, but the brown faces of Barney Hall's Tonga boys, escaping from Kohu in the lugger's dinghy.

Soo, the boat-steerer, and his two companions stared at Barney Hall with popping eyes.

The Tonga boys had never dreamed of seeing their skipper again. They had almost forgotten his existence. They had fled into the bush when Van Duck attacked the Tonga lugger. That Barney had escaped with his life had never occurred to them.

"Feller Hall!" stuttered Soo. "That feller Hall stop, my word!"

Barney Hall was grinning with satisfaction. He had lost his lugger, moored in the creek far away across the Kohu lagoon, where the Dutchman and his crew had captured it. But he had found his crew again—and they were in the

# DUTCHMAN'S PRIZE

Determined to discover the pearls hidden on Kohu Island, Van Duck strikes again . . . makes an important capture . . . while Ken King fights a lone battle

By CHARLES HAMILTON

Facing Fearful Odds

SWIFT flashes lit up the darkness that lay like black velvet on the lagoon of Kohu. The roar of rapid rifle-fire rolled across the silent island, waking the echoes of the dim bush, ringing far

across the outer reef and the circling waters of the Pacific.

Ken King, the boy trader of the Pacific, known as King of the Islands, stood on the deck of his ketch Dawn, pumping bullets from his Winchester. Ten or twelve howling Solomon Islanders were swarming up the side—and he faced them alone. Ken would have given, at that moment, all the pearls of Kohu, all the treasures of the Pacific, to have had his mate and comrade, Kit Hudson, standing at his side, or the brave and faithful Koko. But the mate of the Dawn and the brown-skinned boatswain were far away with his crew—whether, even, they were following the stolen ketch from distant Lu'no, he did not know. He was alone—alone and unaided to face a swarm of foes. By luck and pluck, he had recovered possession of the Dawn, and now he was holding the ketch against Van Duck and his crew—one man against a swarm.

From the boat, floating in the darkness under the Dawn's rail, came the ringing of the Dutchman's revolver. Van Duck was firing over the fuzzy heads of his black crew as they attacked. He spat oaths in mingled Dutch and English as he pulled trigger. His savage voice roared at the howling, clambering blacks, "You feller boy! You run along that ketch plenty quick—you kill-dead that feller King of the Islands! You hear me, ear belong you?"

Splashing sounded between the boat and the ketch as black man after man dropped under the rifle-fire from the deck. Hardly six feet from the snarling, savage faces Ken King fired again and again. But the blacks came clambering on, yelling and howling as they tore bare skin on the barbs of the wire stretched round the ketch.

But for the barbed wire, Ken would have been overwhelmed. The attack had come suddenly, the boat shooting out of the dark, the crew of blacks hurling themselves at the ketch. Three of the yelling demons splashed down into the lagoon, but the rest would have been on the deck and the boy trader fighting a hopeless hand-to-hand fight but for the barbed wire. In two strong lines, stapled to uprights cleated to the rail, it en-

circled the ketch fore and aft, and the sharp barbs tore the black hands and bare limbs that surged and struggled and clambered, and held back the rush.

A fuzzy head ducked through. A knife whizzed at the boy trader, but missed as he moved swiftly. His rifle was empty. He clubbed it, and leaped at the black faces that snarled and gibbered through the wire, and struck and struck again.

Back from the crashing rifle-butt went the Solomon Islanders, leaping into the boat or dropping into the lagoon. Stopped by the wire, the fierce defence was too strong for them.

King of the Islands, panting, dropped the rifle to the deck, and whipped the revolver from his belt. He fired at the last fuzzy head as it dropped. A howl and a splash came back.

There was a roar of fury from the boat. Crack, crack! rang the Dutchman's revolver, and Ken fired back from the ketch. But the darkness was too dense for accurate shooting at more than a fathom's length. From the darkness came the Dutch freebooter's furious roar. "You feller boy! You feller Koyo! You run along that feller ketch—my word, you no run along that feller ketch, me knock seven bells outer your black hides!"

There was a wild splashing and howling from the blacks. The Dutchman, in his rage, was striking at them with his clubbed revolver, to drive them on to the attack.

Guided by the splashing and howling, Ken fired into the boat.

Shrill yells came back from the blacks as the bullets pattered among them, and a deeper roar from the Dutchman, telling that he was hit. But it was only a scratch. The enraged ruffian was still shouting to the blacks to attack and striking at them with the pistol-butt.

But the gashes from the barbed wire and the fire from the deck were too much for the Solomon Islanders. The blacks leaped into the water to escape Van Duck's savage blows. Four of the crew had gone down in the lagoon—others were wounded—all the survivors were swimming for the beach, leaving the enraged freebooter alone in the boat.

Crack, crack! from the ketch. Ken could see little or nothing, but he could hear. Twice the hot lead grazed the

cursing Dutchman. Van Duck jammed the oars into the rowlocks and pulled.

Crack, crack! King of the Islands emptied his revolver after the retreating boat. He heard it bump on the beach. Through the darkness he could still hear the enraged roar of the Dutchman. But the attack was over. Ken had saved himself and his ship.

Panting, he wiped the streams of perspiration from his forehead. Quickly he reloaded his firearms. But there was no sound of the boat returning. Dead or wounded, the Dutchman had lost half his crew, and they were not likely to return.

But there was no sleep for King of the Islands that wild night. He watched, with ready rifle, till the golden dawn came up over Kohu and the gleaming lagoon, the circling white beach, met his weary eyes.

## Trouble on the Reef

PETER of Kohu stood on the outer reef of the lonely island and strained his ears to listen. There was a flush in the eastern sky, heralding the coming day. Standing in the shadow of the great cliff of the coral, the boy listened to a sound that came faintly to his ears from the direction of the island.

He could not see it, till the dawning light came stronger, but in that direction lay the passage in the reef—the channel that broke the dark mass of Kohu, leading into the interior lagoon. It seemed to the boy's keen ears that he picked up the sound of oars, and he wondered. It could not be King of the Islands that was coming; only too surely, it seemed to him that Ken King had gone to his death—the heavy firing in the night had told its tale of doom.

Van Duck did not know that he was on the island. But if the blacks came searching the reef for Barney Hall, as they had searched the previous day, it meant deadly peril to the boy. Whether he was, or was not, the son of Black Tom Daly, the pearler, Van Duck believed that he was; and no cruelty would be too savage for the Dutchman, to wring from him the secret of the pearler's cache. He listened with bent head, and unmistakably there came the sound of a boat that groped in the gloom, of an oar that showed on hard coral. And Peter turned swiftly towards the narrow opening of the coral cavern that had been his hiding-place.



## DUTCHMAN'S PRIZE

lugger's boat, which was a windfall to him. It was only a small dinghy, a tiny craft to ride the Pacific rollers, but much more useful than the little bark canoe in the cavern.

Evidently the Tonga boys, hiding in the bush till the enemy were gone, had crept back to the lugger after dark and taken the little dinghy to attempt to escape from the island under cover of the night. Had they succeeded in getting clear before dawn, Barney Hall would never have seen them again.

"By hokey!" said Barney Hall. "This is luck! You feller boy, you stop along this place, along me come along feller boat."

"Yessar!" gasped the astonished Soo. Barney Hall looked round at Peter. The boy had stepped out of the coral fissure, his hand was on the butt of the Tonga trader's revolver. The newcomers were not Van Duck's crew of blacks, as he had feared, but he knew that their coming meant danger for him. Forcibly on the side of the Tonga trader now.

"You come along boat plenty quick, sar," ventured Soo. "Black feller belong Van Duck come along reef, fince this feller Tonga boy, spouse stop along this place."

"You shut up mouth belong you!" snapped Barney Hall.

But he shot a quick, uneasy glance towards the island, growing clearer in the rising sunlight. There was no sign of the enemy. They were not likely to be so early astir, even if they were thinking of resuming the hunt. And now that they had King of the Islands to deal with, it was likely that they had forgotten the fugitive trader. But he was uneasy and anxious to be gone while the going was good.

He made a step towards Peter, and the boy backed away, but not towards the cave. In there he would have been cornered. He watched the Tonga trader warily, his hand on the revolver butt. Hall came to a halt, breathing hard. The Tonga boys watched anxiously, eager to be gone, but not daring to disregard their hard-fisted master now that they were again in his presence, and under his eye. "You young swab!" said Barney Hall, his eyes gleaming at the boy. "We got a chance now of pulling clear—a boat, and a crew to pull. Give me a line on Black Tom's cache of pearls—I'm not going without them. I'll swear that you shall take half, and I'll land you at Ulilo."

The boy did not answer, but he watched Barney like a cat. Whether he knew where to lay hands on the hidden pearls, the treasure of Kohu, could not be read in his face. But if he was the pearly son, there was no doubt that he knew—and Barney Hall was certain that he was the pearly son. The ruffian's face grew red with anger as the boy did not answer him.

"I'm making you a good offer, and that's because you got me away from Van Duck's blacks," said Barney Hall. "But I ain't pulling out of Kohu without the pearls. I reckon Van Duck will lay hands on them if I leave them astern when I pull out. Do you fancy that King of the Islands will beat him—one man against a crew of Solomon Islanders? I reckon Ken King's at the bottom of the lagoon afore this. The whole crew of them may be after me any minute, now the sun's up. Speak, you young swab!"

"Keep your distance, Barney Hall!" There was a quiver in the boy's voice, but his look was steady. "I'll fire if you come nearer."

The Tonga trader made another step—and Peter whipped the revolver from his belt. His eyes flashed over it.

"Keep back, or I'll shoot you like the brute you are."

The Tonga trader clenched his hands with rage. The boy meant every word he said—timid as he was, there was no doubt on that point. The revolver was steady in his hand, looking the ruffian in the face.

"By hokey!" said Barney, gritting his teeth. "You fire a single shot, you young fool, and you'll have Van Duck's crew here—a shot can be heard all over the island. Do you want that crew of cannibals after you?"

"Keep back!" Barney made a gesture to the Tonga boys in the dinghy. Leaving the boat, they stepped on the coral. Peter backed farther away, his revolver still levelled.

"I shall fire, if you or your crew come nearer!" he said steadily. "Get into the boat and go!"

"Not without the pearls!" snarled Barney. "Put up that gun, you young swab—it won't help you much, agin the four of us. You're going to take me straight to that cache of pearls—and I'm going to twist your neck till you do, if there ain't no other way! Now, then!"

Barney Hall made a movement; but he paused, daunted by the levelled revolver and the steady eyes over it. All remembrance of gratitude, all kinder feelings, were gone from the ruffian's heart now. His thoughts were concentrated on the pearls for which he had come to Kohu. His hard face worked with rage as he stared at the boy.

The Tonga boys looked on uneasily, in dread every moment of hearing the howl of the Solomon Islanders, of seeing black faces and fuzzy heads from the bush. Now that the sun was up, the tall mainmast of the Dawn could be seen over the bush on Kohu. Soo had a rugged lump of coral gripped in his brown hand, and he watched the boy stealthily.

From the beach, hidden by the palms and the bush, came a sudden whip-like crack; the report of a firearm. Another shot followed it. Peter gave a start—Barney Hall and his crew turned their eyes at once on the island. The firing showed that the enemy were astir; and it indicated, too, that King of the Islands was not, as Barney supposed, at the bottom of the lagoon.

But that reminder of the enemy decided Barney Hall. He made a sudden leap towards the boy.

Peter fired on the instant. But even as he pulled trigger Soo threw the lump of coral and struck the revolver from his hand.

Crack! Loud and sharp barked the report of the revolver, echoing back from the reef and the bush. But the bullet went nowhere near Barney Hall, as the revolver, struck away, went clattering on the coral.

Peter turned and ran across the reef. Barney Hall rushed after him, panting with rage. He shouted to his crew as he ran.

"You feller boy, you run along that white feller, you catch that white feller!" The clumsy ruffian had little chance in a race with the boy. But the Tonga boys were swifter. They raced past Barney Hall in swift pursuit of the fleeing Peter. Barney panted heavily after them.

Peter cast a wild glance over his shoulder. The Tonga crew were gaining on him. On the open reef, it was only a matter of minutes before he was run down. He swerved, and scudded away towards the island. The bush was his only chance of escape.

The pursuit slackened at once. The bush was full of terrors for the Tonga boys. But Barney Hall, panting on behind them, shouted hoarsely: "You get that feller white boy! You hear me, ear belong you?" He tore on desperately.

Peter reached the island and plunged

into the bush. But the Tonga boys did not follow. From an opening of the bush, a black face stared at them—the face of one of Van Duck's crew. There was a yell from the Solomon Islander, answered by other yells from the bush. Headless of Barney Hall, the three Tonga boys turned and raced back to the boat.

Barney came to a breathless halt. A whizzing bush-knife dropped hardly a fathom short of him as he stood panting. He turned and rushed after his crew, with five or six blacks howling after him.

Soo and his companions were already in the dinghy, pushing off, and only by a desperate leap did the Tonga trader succeed in landing in it before it was gone. Two of the brown boys grabbed the oars and rowed desperately as the blacks came howling over the reef.

Barney Hall looked back with desperate and haggard eyes. Even the pearls were forgotten at that fearful moment. A whizzing knife stuck, quivering in the wood, a foot from the Tonga trader.

But the Tonga boys were pulling like madmen, and the dinghy shot out of the reef channel into the open sea. Barney Hall had escaped by the very skin of his teeth—but the pearls, and the boy who knew the secret, were left on Kohu.

**DRAGGED INTO THE BUSH**

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS sat on the hatchway among the palms, his rifle by his side, a tray on his knees, breaking his fast. His eyes had not closed during the night, but if he was weary, he showed

little sign of it. He was alert, watchful, warily on his guard, as the sun climbed higher in the blue heavens and the morning chorus of a myriad birds echoed from the shores of the lagoon. From where he sat, he could watch on all sides. So long as his eyes did not close in slumber, his enemies had no chance of taking him by surprise. After the terrible lesson of the night, he doubted whether Van Duck would be able to drive his blacks on to another attack, but he was ready for it if it came.

In the clearing light he saw at the back of the beach the hut where Black Tom Daly had lived and rotted out the pearl-oysters.

From the hut came the huge, heavy figure of Van Duck. Of the blacks, Ken could see only two—the others had gone into the bush. The boat lay beached, and one of the Solomon Islanders was sprawling in it, chewing bananas.

Surely, before another day had passed, Ken Hudson would come! Ken could not doubt that Hudson, and Koko, and the Hiva-Oa boys, were already on their way to Kohu, though it was a long, slow, and weary trip for a whaleboat.

The Dutchman watched the ketch, like an angry wolf, but did not loose off his revolver. Then he stared round the beach in search of his crew.

At that moment a shot rang from the direction of the outer reef, hidden from the inner beach by the high, thick bush.

Ken leaped to his feet. The Dutchman spun round, staring towards the reef channel.

"My sainted Sam!" muttered King of the Islands, and his brow was dark and anxious.

The Dutchman disappeared into the bush. Not a human being remained in sight of the boy trader, and he might have fancied, for the moment, that he had the island to himself. Then, from the reef beyond the bush, came the yells and howls of Solomon Islanders.

Ken set his lips.

Since he had seen Barney Hall in flight in the bush, he had heard nothing of the Tonga trader, and had almost forgotten his existence. But he realised now that Barney must have fled out on the reef. He knew that Peter of Kohu had no firearms—it must be Barney Hall's revolver that had rung out in the clear morning air.

The savage yelling and howling told that the blacks were in pursuit of an enemy. The fate of the ruffian of Tonga was a matter of little moment, but Ken was thinking of Peter. The boy had his hiding-place in the coral cave, but the blacks, hunting Barney Hall, might come on it by chance. Ken's heart was heavy with anxiety at the thought.

So far, Van Duck did not know that Peter was on the island. But only too well Ken knew how savagely gleeful the Dutchman would have been to lay hands once more on the boy.

Ken stood by the starboard rail, rifle in hand, watching the beach and the dark impenetrable bush beyond. He would have given much to know what was going on beyond that dense screen of vegetation. From the lagoon, the circling outer reef was hidden save in the spot where the reef channel opened. Ken had a narrow glimpse of part of the reef, and the blue Pacific rolling boundless beyond.

He gave a start as his eyes fell on an object out on the deep waters—little more than a speck in the distance. But he could see that it was a small boat with brown men pulling, and a white man in the stern.

"Hall!" muttered the boy trader.

The distance was too great for recognition, but he knew that it must be Barney Hall. The three brown boys in the boat were the crew of his lugger. They had picked up Barney and were fleeing out to sea to escape the blacks.

And Peter? Unless he had been out of the cave, Van Duck and his crew had no clue to him. King of the Islands hoped and prayed that he was safe in hiding.

Suddenly, from the bush, a black leaped out, ran some distance along the beach, and disappeared into the bush again. A few minutes later Van Duck appeared, revolver in hand, and almost immediately vanished again, like the black, into the bush.

Ken gritted his teeth.

They were hunting! He could see that. It was not for Barney Hall—they must have seen Hall pulling clear, with his crew, in the dinghy. They were hunting for his life. Behind him came a brawny Solomon Islander, scuttling along the beach in pursuit.

Ken's rifle leaped to his shoulder. The range was long, and the black man was moving fast, gaining on the fleeing boy at every stride. But King of the Islands fired with unerring aim, and the lead went true to the mark. The black was hardly three yards behind Peter, his sinewy hand outstretched to grasp him, when the bullet struck. The Solomon Islander spun over like a rabbit and stretched on the sand.

"Aho!" roared Ken. "Peter! Aho! This way—this way!"

That desperate shout reached the boy's ears, distant as he was. He spun round, staring in breathless wonder as King of the Islands waved his rifle. He could see that it was Ken on the Dawn, and the sight amazed him; but he was quick on the uptake, and came running down the beach.

"Run!" shouted Ken. "Run!"

But the boy was already panting across the beach as hard as he could go in the yielding sand. Three blacks were streaking behind him—all gaining fast. From the bush the Dutchman's red-bearded face glared out, and he waved and shouted to the blacks. Ken did not heed the Dutchman. His rifle was aimed at the leading Solomon Islander, and he fired, shooting him down hardly a couple of yards from the running boy.

He fired again, and another black rolled yelling on the sand. But the third reached the boy, and grasped him. A cry came from Peter as he was grasped by the hard black hand—a cry of terror that went to Ken's heart like a pang of pain. His finger was on the trigger, his eye blazing along the rifle, but he could not fire now without hitting the boy struggling in the grasp of the black.

The Dutchman emerged from the bush, his brutal face ablaze with glee. Ken's face was white. He had to fire, or see the boy disappear into the bush in that savage grasp. He had to take the risk. The boy, struggling and crying out, was dragged up the beach towards where the Dutchman stood—and Ken pulled trigger.

A yell answered the shot. It came from the Solomon Islander, and he pitched over. The boy, thrown from his grasp, fell, too. But he was on his feet again in a moment.

Even as he gained them, the Dutchman rushed at him, flung him over his brawny shoulder like a sack of copra, and plunged back to the bush.

Ken, in desperation, fired again. But with a desperate leap, the Dutchman gained the bush, the bullet knocking up sand behind him as he went. Another moment, and he was out of sight.

Ken dropped the butt of his rifle to the deck and groaned aloud.

Peter was a prisoner in the grip of the bully of the Sunda, and King of the Islands could not save him.

Next Week:  
**RESCUE UNDER FIRE!**

## BILLY BUNTER—Choreboy!



Packing "cats" in his own fat circumference never seems to tire Billy Bunter . . . but waiting hand and foot on a gang of roughnecks is an entirely different matter. Yet the fat junior from Greyfriars is only too glad to make himself useful when the order is backed by guns!

If you want a feast of thrills read, in this week's MAGNET, of the exciting adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. way out in Texas.

The  
**MAGNET**

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